

Support Bill SB422 An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies and the Sellers of Bottled Water

Date of hearing MARCH 11, 2016

To the Planning and Development Committee:

Due to the very concerning, disturbing, and distasteful situation Bloomfield residents are now facing against Niagara Bottling Plant, their elected officials, and the MDC who has lost track of its mandate to return waters from the watershed, back to the watershed; and by extension all residents who live in the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers Watersheds, for fear of future perceived pocket-lining deals made by corporations to elected officials that may trample their basic human needs for clean water and for the communities' rights and responsibilities to self-govern through transparency and communication; we are in dire need of legislation that will prohibit any company from coming into CT and purchasing water for less than the taxpayers pay AND to prohibit town councils from dealing individually with companies whose business impacts the state's water supply without oversight and agreement of all impacted by such agreements.

The bill as raised in the committee requires revision. Support the raised bill but consider substitute language. Points to consider:

- **Protect residents, not water bottlers during a drought. If the DPH declares a Drought Advisory, the production of bottled water in CT needs to stop.**
- **Rescind water rate discounts for water bottlers. They extract large amounts of our municipal water and spring water, fill the environment with plastic pollution, and profit while citizens are conserving and paying more.**
- **Rescind the *Special Sewer Service Charge* discount for water bottlers (now known as the *Clean Water Project Charge*). CT ratepayers have paid for years to build infrastructure for clean water; no discounts for corporations.**
- **Re-establish a citizen MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) watch dog committee.**
- **Impose a moratorium on any new large capacity agreements until the State Water Plan is completed and addresses the issue of water bottling companies diverting water out of watersheds.**

I understand Niagara Water is lobbying you on this issue. Your constituents and taxpayers deserve consideration long before any company who is receiving tax abatements and secret approvals from the town committees. It perturbs me greatly to read Niagara's press release that they have dealt with small Facebook groups before and that "there will always be a small minority that is opposed to bottled water and who chose to ignore the facts." The Bloomfield elected officials needed to be more concerned with their constituents right to be involved in decision making, rather than showing more concern for Niagara's need to keep the potential deal out of Niagara's competitors earshot-what an extremely lame rationale by elected Bloomfield officials. The fact that Niagara was "gunshy" about permitting after a NY community protested, draws lines of questionable judgment and possible motives for all players involved who allowed the permitting to go through in Bloomfield without public hearing (see WNPR article <http://wnpr.org/post/niagara-water-plant-bloomfield-residents-feel-shut-out#stream/0>). Through your legislation, please make what has happened in the town of Bloomfield never happen again.

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